594 What differences in circumstances existed that might affect nutritional level? On the one hand were relatively isolated nuclear families, which we estimated as 15-20% of the
434 families, living in tiny separate cottages.[1] Usually with in-
444 adequate or no land, they earned an irregular income by hiring
423 themselves out for farm or other work. At the other extreme,
596 in a hamlet-like cluster of dwellings, lived a closely affili-
592 ated group of kin. A senior couple more or less headed the
476 married sisters, brothers, or children, maybe with a hired man, or family that as autonomous households cooperated amicably in economic and domestic tasks. We estimated these as 20-25% of the Bang Chan families. The larger social unit, having more hands to produce, and to share tasks, was better able to provide good food and general health care to its members, than a small isolated family. Four problems more easily handled by the larger group were household chores and child-care, farming, borrowing, and earning money.

855 Young children had to be constantly tended lest they fall into the water, the fire, or under the buffalo's feet. They never entered the fields during work. Fishing and gathering of water plants was complicated because in boats, small children had to be held. Where there were but two parents and young children, one parent could not do many things until the other came home. Perhaps neither partner could stay away long enough to get a big batch of fish or greens from the canal, or
[252] to the store. Cooking was simplified, or food might be prepared once a day only. Respite came only when the first born was able to help oversee a younger child, sometimes staying home from school to do so. Where the adult cooperative
596 group was larger, movement was freer. All the strong adults
476 could work in the fields or at a job, confident that the home was well tended. They came home to a well-prepared meal, ready when they wanted it. Such households had more fresh fish because farm work could be completed sooner, hence more persons
[871] could devote themselves to fishing. Some physically able members could even be spared and financed to go beyond the required four grades of elementary school.

241 Plowing could be done by a man and wife, but for both
462 transplanting and harvesting which had to be done within a few
476 days, large groups were necessary. Two patterns of auxiliary
464 group labor prevailed: reciprocal cooperative work, and hiring of labor.

113
114 1. Janlekha, 1955, categorized families as 5% "one-
162 person," 59% nuclear, 8% limited extended (including one or
594 more parents of a spouse), 27% extended (including dependent
596 married couples or other collateral relatives), and the temple
423 residents. At least 32% of the families had inadequate or no land. His figures do not indicate the degree of domestic cooperation which was an ameliorating factor in well-being.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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continually brings to the attention of the villagers urban standards and aspirations which, whenever possible, they attempt to apply to themselves. L. M. Hanks (1959*b*: 19) sees the operation of this characteristic acculturative mechanism in Bang Chan in terms of the villagers' "search for respectability": "A respectable cremation requires an orchestra; a respectable dwelling a tile roof; a respectable sickness an injection; and a respectable family must chaperone carefully its growing daughters. So run a host of points which help to bolster but not necessarily to advance social position."

Yet, after the relationship between village and town has been considered, Bang Chan remains very much a peasant community, whose residents are concerned first and foremost with the cultivation of rice, the maintenance of their monastery, and their own immediate social environment. Despite aspirations, many Bang Chan cremations must go without the orchestra; most dwellings lack the tile roof; injections are taken only by those who can afford them; and the necessity for boys and girls to work together during harvest time, a period of unavoidably infectious joy, precludes any rigidly imposed chaperonage. Perhaps the best assessment of the cultural position of Bang Chan was provided by the writer's field assistant—an individual born and reared in a village in the Northeast who, although in many respects worldly and urbane, maintained an almost passionate identification with his peasant background—who said: "When I first came here to Bang Chan, I never thought that people living so close to Bangkok could be *real* Thai villagers. But they are. They are not as friendly and hospitable as Northeastern peasants, and they are more interested in money, but they have a much greater love of the land. No city person could ever think and feel as they do."

Family Life and Social Organization

In terms of the traditional categories of social structural analysis, the social organization of Bang Chan is strikingly simple. There are essentially only five social units which demand, and toward which villagers express, relatively enduring psychological commitments. These are the nuclear family,

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home from school, the curriculum for which is written and directed by Ministry of Education officials in the city. Approximately 14 percent of Bang Chan households have battery driven radios (there is no electricity in the village) and approximately 60 percent of the villagers can read, although considerably fewer actually have the proficiency to go comfortably through a newspaper; theoretically the same number of people can write, but few Bang Chan adults have the courage to take pencil to paper without feeling discomfort over their handwriting, spelling, and knowledge of stylistic forms. Newspapers that people bring home from town are passed around and read more for their entertainment than information; the few books that are seen in the village are pulp magazines, religious or moralistic writings, and occasionally do-it-yourself pamphlets ("How to Raise Chickens the Modern Way").

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a loosely defined, laterally oriented kindred; the nation-state (mentioned not for formal reasons, but because it actually is psychologically important); and to a lesser extent, the village monastery and school. Of these five institutions, the nuclear family is the principal focus of psychological concern, beyond the individual himself. Otherwise, there are in Bang Chan no castes, age-grade societies, occupational groups (other than the family), neighborhood groups, or groups expressive of village solidarity (such as councils or governing boards) which might impose a sense of obligation on the villagers, or to whose norms or functions the villagers might have to conform.* Bang Channers do not have to contribute their labor to their community, serve as village guards, contend with the dictates of village elders, or even actively coöperate with fellow villagers.

All villagers have additional relationships of varying degrees of intimacy both within and without the community, but these are dyadic, not group, relationships based on implicit expectations of mutual benefit. Such contacts are in nature primarily idiosyncratic (friends), transient (reciprocal work groups, gambling and drinking partners), or contractual (as opposed to affective or kin determined: vendors, landlords, debtors, rice millers, employers, and doctors). It is important to recognize that if some of these latter relationships take on positive affective qualities, they may also assume some of the forms and feelings of kinship. Thus, a young man who is taken on as a hired hand by a family frequently ceases to be considered an "employee" and becomes instead an "adopted son." (This type of *gemeinschaft* relationship, contrary perhaps to theoretical expectations, is also characteristic of many occupational situations in Bangkok.) In a similar vein, the terms for older sibling (*phii*), elder uncle (*lung*), and elder aunt (*paa*) are used as terms of address and reference between individuals who are obviously not related to each other, but who wish to mark overtly their fondness and respect for one another. The use of these

* There are two minor exceptions to this generalization: (1) a monastery lay committee whose functions are limited to the secular tasks of monastery administration, and membership in which brings prestige and Buddhist merit to a few selected members of the community; and (2) reciprocal work groups organized for and limited to rice transplanting and harvesting, membership in which is completely voluntary and a matter of mutual convenience (Janlekha 1955). Careful accounts are kept as to how much labor is contributed by each participating family, and responsibility for remitting labor received lies with the individual participant, not the group.

It must be noted that the monastery and its cadre of relatively permanent monks, although the very institution that defines the existence of "the village of Bang Chan," is not from the point of view of its clientele primarily a unit representative of village cohesiveness. It is first and foremost *a* Buddhist monastery where one may make merit and only secondarily *the Bang Chan* Monastery. Several members of the community patronize other monasteries, and several Bang Chan monks come from other locales. The keen sense of individual obligation that villagers feel toward their monastery could be directed toward any monastery.

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fictive terms is of course sometimes prompted by nothing more than the desire to be polite, but equally often it symbolizes genuine feelings of affection and obligation not too different from what the terms imply when they are used in their original kinship context. Bang Chaners have a wonderfully convenient term, *phyan-yaad*, a compound meaning literally "family friends," which is used to refer both to friends to whom ego feels so close that he considers them members of his family and to individuals whom he considers his friends *because* they are members of his family. The particular persons to whom this term, as well as those noted above, is applied vary widely from informant to informant (expectedly so because they are non-institutionalized terms). However, the point to be emphasized is that for all villagers kinship provides a basic referential mechanism for expressing the degree of psychological affiliation that they feel toward other human beings.

An *awareness* of degrees of psychological affiliation and obligation and of the modes for expressing such sentiments are very much a part of village life. For with the exception of the five institutions mentioned above, most Bang Chaners, as I have noted elsewhere (Sharp *et al.* 1956: 241), are really not obliged—and do not feel obliged—to be beholden to anyone but themselves. In a very real sense, the village is comprised of 1,771 individualists whose major goals in life are to obtain sufficient land to support themselves, their growing children, and their religion, free from physical insecurities and unencumbered by entangling social obligations. When they enter into relationships with other people they do so with an awareness that they are always acting of their own free will.

Despite the conventions of ethnographic reporting, it is difficult to delimit the precise nature of the nuclear family in Bang Chan. The nuclear family clearly is the ideal for all villagers, but because Bang Chaners are just as responsive to convenience as they are to custom, there is considerable variation regarding this ideal. In his study of the economy of the village, Janlekha (1955) found it necessary to distinguish five different kinds of functioning, mutually exclusive household units in Bang Chan: the typical nuclear family (59.4 percent of all households); a limited extended family, consisting of a man, wife, either or both their sets of parents, and unmarried children (8.1 percent); an extended family, consisting of the limited extended family plus married children, the latters' children, and any collateral relatives of any generation (26.8 percent); a one-person family (5.4 percent); and the ecclesiastical "family," consisting of the order of Buddhist monks, the only truly corporate group in the village (0.3 percent). (These variations of the nuclear family, all localized groups, should of course not be confused with what I, following Sharp [1957], have been calling the kindred, with what Kaufman [1960] refers to as spatially and

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121 remotely extended families, or with what L. M. Hanks [1959c] calls the
594 multi-local extended family, about which there is more below.)

591 The variations of the nuclear family, obviously excepting the monkhood,
594 arise primarily out of the large proportion of recently married couples who find it more expedient to continue living with one set of parents while accumulating funds for setting up their own independent households. In the case of one-person families, the variation arises when individuals are unable to live with their kin, are deserted by them, or have none. All the one-person families tend to be poor and are comprised largely of elderly people. In arrangements of the former type, there is a slight (five to three) tendency to matrilocality over patrilocality, and despite the intention of all concerned that the arrangements remain impermanent, there is considerable variability as to how long they are maintained. Analyzing a sample of 96 Bang Chan families, Janlekha found that although 30 percent came into being as nuclear families immediately after marriage, the balance underwent a period of residence with parents ranging from one to twenty years, the average being four years, with 16 percent never moving from the parents' home at all. Most cases of what Janlekha calls "limited extended families" result from a stem family inheritance pattern, although some entail elderly parents breaking up their households and moving in with the family of one of their mature children.

In addition to these basic variations, more accurately labeled "alternatives," there are several other variations of the nuclear family that occur with sufficient frequency to be noticed and at the same time are considered not at all unusual by the villagers themselves. Their significance for us is that they reveal what appears to be an almost nonchalant willingness or acquiescence on the part of the villagers to make modifications and adjustments in their living arrangements whenever necessary. Underlying this seems to be a fundamental assumption that the question of who lives with whom simply is not one of overriding importance: as long as individuals can live together without discord, act in terms of the household's established patterns of superordination and subordination, contribute labor or money to the family larder commensurate with their ages, and not inconvenience each other, they will be welcomed into the household; if unable or unwilling to fulfill such elementary obligations, they may take their leave, even if they are in fact full-fledged members of the nuclear family.

This rather flexible, or what the late John Embree would have called (1950) "loosely structured," approach to family organization is expressed in both centripetal and centrifugal ways.

596 Consonant with the fact that in all but the poorest Bang Chan families there is almost always enough rice to feed another mouth, it is common in

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the village to find dependent relatives—siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces— 596
who, unable to make a go of it elsewhere, are accepted into a relative's family, sometimes to the extent of eventually taking over the headship of the family. Sometimes, on the initiative and invitation of an elderly or lonely relative, an entire nuclear family will be asked to take over or share a household. Children of poor or "inconvenienced" families (where a new 596
child is born before the first is weaned, where there are too many children 597
for the mother to handle comfortably, where a youngster is simply being "troublesome") are adopted or "borrowed" by other villagers for varying periods of time. This is done preferably by relatives, sometimes by neighbors, and often, in the case of boys, by the monastery, where the children become hand-servants to the monks and are supposed to absorb, by a kind of osmotic process, righteous ways of behaving. (Of my three male life history informants, two were given over to relatives at the ages of two, the third at the age of eight; one spent his childhood with four different families, another with five families; one describes his adolescence as "wandering from place to place." The psychological implications of such displacement should not be underestimated.) On occasion, two independent 596
nuclear families—almost always connected by some kinship tie—will join [594]
together for convenience to share cooking facilities, in which case they effectively become a single extended family. And in some cases, although rare, one will encounter adult children living in independent households but handing over their income to a parent, living in still another home, who disburses the proceeds when necessary.

On the other side, it is common practice in Bang Chan now for a 596
husband to be away for four or five months at a time earning money in 591
Bangkok, or during the dry season on a vegetable farm, returning home to [464]
visit his wife and children whenever opportunity permits, with or without funds. The wife may still maintain their household, but often returns to 596
live with her own parents.[7] In a similar vein, although obviously more 586
extreme, it is not unusual to find families in Bang Chan which have simply 182
"disintegrated," as the villagers say. Much depends here on the circumstances of family members. Bang Chaners usually reserve the term "disintegrated" for families that no longer have the economic wherewithal or justification for staying together as functioning units. In these instances, family members simply go their separate ways, if possible back to their families of orientation or to other relatives, husbands perhaps into the monkhood, and the children to whomever will take them. Most frequently, [578]
"disintegration" is characteristic of very poor families, and in the minds of

[7] This pattern may be related to the old *corvée* labor pattern when able-bodied village men were away from their families for extended periods of time. [466] [651] [174]

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596 182 586 [578] [576] the villagers is contrasted with those cases of separation or divorce which are viewed as resulting more from social psychological reasons: arguments, contrariness, general incompatability, and wasting or not sharing money. The squandering of money is a most frequent cause of family discord contributing to family dissolution, especially when it involves the three aphoristic evils of Thai life: women, whiskey, and opium (although, in fact, I know of only two cases where Bang Chaners have been reputed to smoke opium).

586 595 Precise figures on the divorce or separation rate in Bang Chan are unknown, primarily because many marriages as well as divorces are never registered on the government roll. Also, many separations seem to follow an on-again-off-again pattern; the sanctioned occurrence of polygyny (only eight known cases out of the 296 families) and even polyandry (two known cases) complicates the problem even further. However, the fact that *four months* after I had designated a sample of thirty families from which to [581] select informants, six of those families, or 20 percent of the sample population, had dissolved would strongly suggest that Bang Chan families are not particularly stable.

593 586 183 The causes of family fission in these specific cases are unknown, but what is impressive is the apparent ease with which it takes place and the equanimity with which people seem to accept it. Other informants, reporting their own experiences or observations, discuss family breakups as if they were among the more normal events of the workaday world and completely understandable. They seem to be of no greater emotional import—in the sense of eliciting recognizable feelings of distress—than losing a good price on the sale of a piece of land or on the sale of some rice. In fact, the latter kinds of situations are considerably more likely to evoke expressions of hurt or exasperation. One repeatedly encounters in Bang Chan instances on the following order: a family breaks up simply because the husband has an inclination to work for a particular person whom he likes; a wife ("she is a touchy woman") runs away every time she has a minor disagreement with her husband (minor even by village standards, for example, "Should I buy my lottery tickets from Mr. X or Mr. Y?"; "Should we invite seven monks or ten monks to officiate at this ceremony?"). The point here is that these explanations—and the low tolerance for discord, the importance to a person of a boss or job over a spouse, the desire to be footloose, which they imply—are to the villagers completely reasonable justifications for the dissolution of family units.

174 594 596 Many of the family relationships referred to above as "centripetal" in nature are clearly related to or derived from patterns of social organization characteristic of an earlier Bang Chan. Although most evidence indicates that even in the years immediately following the settlement of the village in

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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the 1880's, the nuclear family was the primary social unit,[8] it is equally clear that extended family relations played a highly significant role—considerably more so than they do today—in the total life of the community. The precise nature of that role resists easy terminological formulation. In his reconstruction of the history of Bang Chan, L. M. Hanks (1959c) speaks of two types of "extended families" typical of early Bang Chan, one organized along lineal lines toward a single parent, and the other based on an alliance of siblings. In both cases, members of these groups assisted each other "by working in the fields, sharing food and equipment, helping with chores and celebrating special occasions together," and effectively formed what Hanks calls "extended family hamlets." These larger family units, however, were based on personal compatability, or in the case of the lineally oriented family, on the wealth and leadership of a particularly dynamic individual. They were never based on compelling structural characteristics such as corporate ownership of land or homes. Since many of the individual nuclear families were poor and trying to live off a land that was essentially a frontier, it made sense that they should join together or attach themselves to a wealthier, more powerful individual, and that the primary criterion for association should be the kinship tie with its built-in sentiments of affiliation, familiarity, and trust. However, since the basis of association here was at all times an economic-functional one—it was *reciprocal* and *mutual* benefits that brought people together, not an overriding ethic of familial solidarity—it might perhaps be better to think of such families as associations of "kindred" in the technical sense rather than

[8] Since almost all Thai history, by Thai or foreigners, is primarily a court history and concerned with activities of the kingdom at large or activities at the seat of power (where, of course, most of the literati, writers and readers, lived) there is little documentation on the history of the peasant family or any changes it might have gone through. Phya Anuman Rajadhon's profoundly knowledgeable, but highly idealized, essays on "ancient customs" of Thailand (Rajdadhon ["Sathien Koset"] 1957 and Rajadhon 1954, 1958) contain references vaguely suggestive of an extended family system among peasants: "the house a groom built always had to be in the home compound of his father-in-law," for example, the time and effort demanded by house-building suggesting a high degree of permanency, the compound implying extended family unity. But the data are too meager and uneven to form the basis of anything more than speculation. On the other hand, comparative distributional data on other Thai-speaking peasants (P. K. Benedict 1943, Seidenfaden 1958); the great emphasis in traditional law, going back to the decrees of Rama Tibodi I in the mid-fourteenth century, on the absence of family responsibility in the commission of individual crime (Lingat 1936 and 1952); and the background commentary in Thailand's great multi-authored love epic of the late eighteenth–early nineteenth century, *Khun Chang and Khun Phaen*, all suggest that the peasant family has remained remarkably stable through the centuries as a nucleated, independently functioning unit linked to other families in the community by loose ties of kinship. The fact that family names did not come into use in Thailand until 1916, and then only by royal decree, further suggests that the extended family was never the major kinship unit.

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"extended families." The aim of all Bang Chan families even then was to attain a position in which they would be free from such obligations or would have other families dependent upon them.

In the intervening years the influx of new families into Bang Chan, the increased self-sufficiency of the individual nuclear families and, most important, the increased acceptance of commercial values, have served to break down kindred groups so that today few kinsmen work their fields together and even fewer share their food or equipment with one another, beyond what has been noted above. Perhaps the only remaining *universally* practiced function of the old kindred groups is the celebration of ceremonials involving members of the family, particularly cremations and ordinations, the cost and merit of which are shared among the participants, depending upon their wealth. Very often people do not want to borrow from or lend money or equipment to kinsmen precisely because the intrusion of the kinship tie makes the collection of such debts doubly awkward ("relatives take twice as long in repaying money; I do not want to lend anything to them"). However, the old forms have not been completely obliterated and when necessity requires or personal convenience moves an individual to look to others, the traditions of extended kinship, as indicated earlier, may be invoked.

For purposes of conceptual convenience, two types of kindred may be specified: the kind referred to above which involves kinsmen living in the village and to which Kaufman (1960) gives the name "spatially extended family"; and the type descriptive of relatives living outside Bang Chan, dispersed throughout other villages and provinces or in Bangkok, and called by Kaufman "the remotely extended family" and by L. M. Hanks (1959c) "the multi-local extended family." These terms are of course generic labels descriptive of actual or potential relationships between individuals, not of specifically delimited groups. Sometimes Bang Chaners attempt to extend the definition of the latter type of relationship to individuals who have never heard of them, but who may be in a position to help their son obtain a job in the city or get him admitted into a vocational school. Hanks has shown how the multi-local extended family has to a limited extent in recent years rejuvenated extended kinship ties by becoming the major institutional mechanism through which villagers leave Bang Chan to seek their fortunes elsewhere. (This last phrase is not merely a figure of speech; many young Bang Chan men have what could be called almost a Dick Whittington view about leaving Bang Chan for Bangkok.) A cousin who undertakes to serve as a villager's liaison to a city job or who offers him a place to stay usually does so willingly, for it creates obligations which may be called upon later if need be.

The above description of variations and extensions has been presented

*243
476 utilized only 26 man-hours of labor, entertaining the same
461 groups involved as many as 158½ man-hours.

Labor Requirement in Rice Production

*243 During the 1953-54 rice year, an exploratory study of
461 labor requirement in rice production was conducted, using
*128 only one farm. This farm was operated by Headman Chom Srisuay of KY5. It was one among the 104 sample farms covered by the preliminary survey in 1948-49. The choice of this farm was made on the basis of the high degree of cooperation given us by Chom and all his family.

• [594] During the period covered by this special study of labor requirement, Chom had a family of nine, consisting of Husband Chom (47), Wife Sai (44), three sons -- Phuan (19), Phan (16) and Phloen (8), and four daughters -- Phung (15), Phad (13), Bunmarg (7) and Mian (4).

In the year of the study of labor requirement, Chom operated a farm of 49 rai consisting of four parcels: Parcel A, 7 rai; Parcel B, 20 rai; Parcel C, 7 rai; Parcel D, 15 rai. The locations of these parcels are shown in the sketch map on page

Part of Parcel A was used at the beginning of the sea-
*243 son as seedbed. After the seedlings had been uprooted and
461 transplanted, this parcel was again plowed and harrowed and planted to three varieties of rice -- Mue Hag, Ched Ruang and Khao Sa-ing. Parcel B was also planted to three varieties -- Mue Hag, Ched Ruang and glutinous rice. Parcel C was planted to only one variety -- Mue Hag. Parcel D was planted to two

*243 varieties -- Khao Sa-ing and floating rice. The areas in each
461 parcel planted to different varieties are given below.

Parcel	Total area rai	Area planted to each variety Var. name	Area in rai
A	7	Mue Hag	3
		Khao Sa-ing	3
		Ched Ruang	1
B	20	Mue Hag	10
		Ched Ruang	7½
		Glutinous rice	2½
C	7	Mue Hag	7
D	15	Khao Sa-ing	9
		Floating rice	6

It may be seen that actually there were five varieties altogether. The areas devoted to these varieties were as follow: Mue Hag, 20 rai; Khao Sa-ing, 12 rai; Ched Ruang, 8½ rai; glutinous rice, 2½ rai; floating rice, 6 rai. Since 6 rai was planted to floating rice and it was mentioned in the first section of this chapter that this floating rice lent itself only to the broadcasting method, it may be noted here that of the total area in rice of 49 rai, 43 rai was devoted to transplanted rice and 6 rai was devoted to broadcast rice.

*243 Of the nine members of the family, Chom, Sai, Phuan
• 594 and Phan were first-rate workers while Phung -- the fifteen
461 year old daughter -- was diligent but still needed more training in the farm work. Chom kept four buffaloes. Thus the needed four regular workers who were supposed to be Chom, Sai, Phuan and Phan. When the work season was about to begin, however, Phan was engaged by the Cornell research team as a

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 242a]

*243 row man. He could not very well be substituted by his younger
• 594 sister who was also needed to perform the housework. A worker
461 was thus hired for the period of two months -- from the middle
[464] of June to the middle of August -- primarily to help in plowing. Phan also partially helped in plowing and harrowing in part of the morning session before he started his work for the Cornell team at nine o'clock.

[476] During the cooperative work season, Chom represented the family in cooperative uprooting and cooperative harvesting, and Phuan in cooperative transplanting, weeding and harvesting. Phan also represented the family in cooperative work scheduled for Saturdays and Sundays when he was free from Cornell duty.

*243 Work records of all workers of this farm were kept by
461 the author throughout the work season from June 4, 1953 to
*128 February 14, 1954. At the beginning, the author stayed overnight with the family. Family workers were requested to give accounts of their activities of the day. To facilitate more accurate accounts regarding the time of the work, a clock was
[115] given to the family. When family workers became acquainted with the type of information that was needed, Phan, our row man, was assigned to make a daily report on the kinds and time of work done by each worker. Phan's daily report was taken down by the author in the labor schedule specially prepared for the purpose.[3] Later, when Phan's reporting skill was well developed, he was asked to report on the daily labor records only four times a week, usually Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

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3. See Appendix B.